

REMARKS

According to the present Office Action, claims 1-15, 19-24, 33-40 are pending in the application. Claims 28-32 have previously been canceled.

Applicants' undersigned attorney wishes to thank Examiner Michael Hicks for the opportunity, on May 5, 2009, to conduct a telephonic interview regarding the pending Application. During the interview, Applicants discussed the pending claims and how they are patentable over the cited references. The Examiner appreciated the distinctions and agreed to reconsider the outstanding rejections pending a further review. Should the examiner have any questions or concerns that might be efficiently resolved by way of a telephonic interview, the examiner is invited to call Applicants' undersigned attorney at 206-903-2474.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-14, 19-24 and 33-40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Pub. No. 200210078045 A1 (Dutta) in view of U.S. Pub. No. 200410034633 A1 (Rickard) and further in view of U.S. Pat. No. 6,963,867 B2 (Ford et al.). It is respectfully submitted that claims 1-14, 19-24 and 33-40 are patentable for the reasons set forth below.

In the Office Action page 2, the Examiner contends that Rickard when combined with Ford discloses that the score is inversely based on the number of documents on the server of Dutta and that the score is distributed to the documents on the server. Applicant respectfully disagrees. Rickard paragraph 0067 discloses “inverse document frequency, which weights the relevance of keywords in a multi-keyword query in inverse proportion to *the number of documents in which they occur*” (emphasis added). Thus, for example, if a keyword occurred in five documents, then the relevance for the keyword would be weighted by 1/5. If the keyword occurs in ten documents, then the relevance would be weighted by 1/10. Thus, the relevance would *vary* as a function of the number of documents containing the keyword.

In contrast, claim 1 recites “calculating said score in inverse proportion to *the number of documents hosted on said Web server*” (emphasis added). Claim 1 does not recite a search for a keyword, or for the number of occurrences of any particular search term. According to Claim 1, for example, if the number of documents on the server is ten, then the score for every document

hosted on that server is weighted by 1/10, regardless of the occurrence of any search term. Applicant further notes that claim 1 is useful, for example, for assigning every page on a web server the same minimum score and thus negating the effect of schemes to inflate the score of a web page using self-endorsing web pages on the same server. The method disclosed by the combination of Dutta and Rickard does not disclose any means to provide such a minimum score to every document hosted on a server.

The Examiner further contends that claim 1 is disclosed by the concept of inverse frequency weighting and adding the idea, from Ford, of ranking based on the number of items in a category. The deficiencies of Dutta and Rickard are not cured by adding Ford to the mix. Applicant has reviewed the cited passages from Ford and submits that Ford does not disclose the number of documents on a web server as contended. The Examiner states that Ford discloses categories. Categories is not the same as the number of documents on a web server. A review of the Ford reference indicates that categories may include, for example, authors of books. Applicant submits that it is well known to those skilled in the art that such categories do not correlate to numbers of documents.

In the Office Action page 3, the Examiner further states that if a web site has only a single category, representative of all of the pages for that site, then the number of items in that category would be equal to the number of items on the page, and that when combined, Rickard and Ford create the idea of inversely weighting a document based on the number of documents in its category/domain. Applicant respectfully disagrees. Ford teaches generating a score that reflects a relevance of the category to a search, including, for example, the number of hits within each category. Rickard teaches increasing relevance weight in inverse proportion to a number of occurrences of a keyword, if fewer occurrences indicate greater specificity (and thus an increasing significance). Even if a web site has only a single category, the selection of all pages in that category would imply that increasing numbers of occurrences signify increasing relevance. Rickard's inverse proportion concept only applies when decreasing numbers of occurrences of a keyword signify greater weight. Applicant thus submits that one skilled in the art would not combine Ford and Rickard in the instance where increasing keyword occurrences

signify reduced weight. Accordingly, the combination of Ford and Rickard fail to disclose or suggest claim 1.

As stated, claim 1 recites assigning a score in inverse proportion to the number of documents located on the Web server. Applicant respectfully submits that none of the cited references, either alone or in combination, discloses “assigning said score to said document in inverse proportion to the number of documents located on said Web server resulting in said score being assigned to said document by being distributed among said number of documents” (emphasis added) as recited in claim 1. Thus, for example, the influence of endorsements for a Web page when they originate from the same server may be diminished. Using the methods of Dutta and Ford, either alone or in combination, such efforts may be thwarted by increasing the number of documents endorsing a particular page. Even if the inverse proportion concept of Rickard is added, wherein a highly scored document would have a smaller number of keywords, numbers of web pages endorsing such a document may be increased, thus inflating the overall relevance of that document.

The other independent claims, 19 and 33, recite similar subject matter to that of claim 1 and are thus patentable for similar reasons. Insofar as any dependent claims incorporate limitations from these independent claims, they also patentably define over the cited art.

Applicant has amended claims 1 in order to more clearly recite the claimed subject matter. Claim 1 now recites, for example, “a method for adjusting a score of a document *wherein said score increases in proportion to a number of said structurally linked documents endorsing said document*” (emphasis added).

CONCLUSION

Applicant believes that the present remarks are responsive to each of the points raised by the examiner in the Office Action, and submits that claims 1-14, 19-24 and 33-40 of the application are in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and passage to issue of the application at the examiner's earliest convenience is earnestly solicited.

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